PASTORAL LIFE

A PUBLICATION FOR PRIESTS

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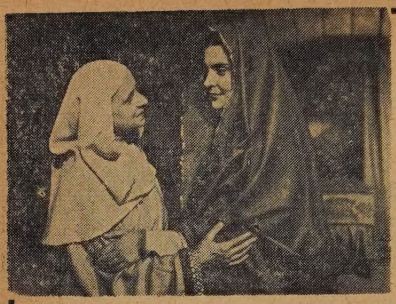

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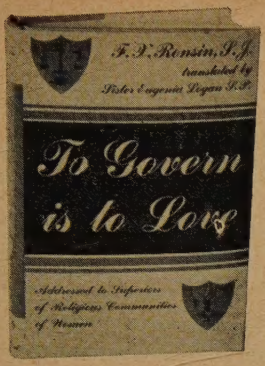
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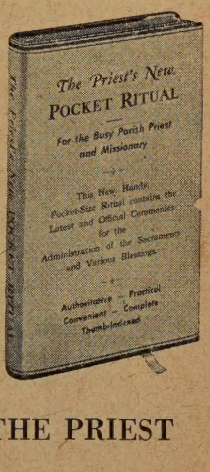
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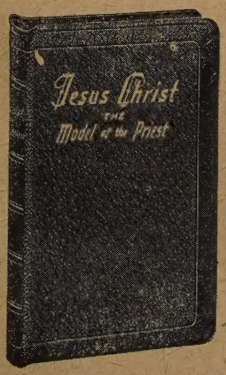

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• PASTORAL LIFE •

VOL. II, No. 2 March - April, 1954

"Because They Know His Voice"

Rev. Daniel F. Dunn

TRAVELING through many sections of the United States, while visiting rural pastors, I have had a unique opportunity to see the universal Catholic spirit in many different phases. Everywhere, the unwavering faith in all articles of the Creed, participation in the entire Sacramental system, and a sincere endeavor to follow the teachings of Christ and to aid our fellow men, make any traveling Catholic feel at home. The traveling priest, although he may be stared at as a curiosity in localities where people deprived of our blessed Faith are living, immediately recognizes the Catholicity of our Catholic people when he meets them. I have chanced upon parishes in the midst of a food shower for the pastor, planned to make sure that his locker and refrigerator would never resemble Mother Hubbard's cupboard. On many more occasions I have returned to the rectory with pastors who found baskets of eggs, frozen loins of pork, a few T-bone steaks wrapped in the locker package, and other worthwhile gifts, left anonymously at the door in the pastor's absence. Frequently these pastors have remarked that this happens often, with nobody ever claiming credit. I am quite convinced that the rural Catholics do not insist that a tablet must be erected in their memory to commemorate each of their donations in fulfillment of the fifth precept of the Church.

Occasions such as I have described often remind me of an incident which happened during the depression years. At that time I

Father Dunn is one of Archbishop Cushing's "Lend Lease" priests, who since February 1952 has been acting as Executive Secretary in the Des Moines office of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Besides editing the releases for NCRLC he has contributed articles to a score of periodicals.

was assistant in a parish located in a mill district, Newton Upper Falls. The people were rich in Faith and old European tradition, although suffering from the industrial depression. With two committee men, I had gone to the downtown Boston wholesale hardware district. One of the officials of the firm, quite evidently not a Catholic, insisted on talking with me privately. He told me that he could see that I was in a parish with poor people, and that he would give me some advice. Said he, "Maybe you could get the church out near where I am living. Every Sunday, such crowds they have! I am telling you, it must be a gold mine. Every Monday morning, my wife is seeing the Brink's bank truck stopping there to get the money." He appeared quite disappointed that I did not become entirely enthusiastic over his proposal. How differently we priests evaluate a parish! We look upon it as a section of the Lord's vineyard, where we follow our calling, endeavoring to save our own souls aiding others to attain salvation.

My many visits to rural rectories in the different sections of the U.S. bring back that happening in the hardware store and provoke the thoughts, "All is not gold that glitters," and "It is not only the armored bank trucks but the pick-up trucks, garaged in the implement sheds belonging to Catholic farmers, which transport material treasures donated to hasten the distribution of spiritual treasures on the American scene."

Country Parishes

We may frequently classify parishes into distinct types. But we do not claim the "preferred class" rating for any one of them. There are big parishes which are too large for a pastor to care alone, and other parishes where an assistant is not needed. Each has its purpose and apostolic duty to fulfill, whether in the crowded cities, neighborly suburbs, or the less populated rural

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areas. We cannot rightly overlook any of these integral parts of the One True Church. The rural people and the rural priest need offer no apologies, any more than a distributor of jeeps need be apologetic because his vehicles are not of the same dimension as a trailer truck. Must owners of racing horses be ashamed because their animals have not the girth of the rosin-back Perchons used by circus performers? Let us insist upon this when talking with those who may have been blighted by the materialistic desire to do things "in a big way", and to measure all values by urban standards. There are places for each parish, which another could not fill. God's Church, covering the entire face of the globe to provide for the needs of the soul of every human being, adapts itself accordingly. Men, trained according to a uniform method, members of the Catholic priesthood of Melchisedech, adapt themselves to the needs of people and places.

My correspondence contains information from literally hundreds of rural pastors, each with some variation of parish problems and parish successes. Limited by this column space, I find myself daydreaming (late at night, while the office is quiet—the girls quit work at 4:30) as I try to decide how to select from this wealth of available material. With my mind's eye, I saw the figures of the Evangelists in the four corners of my home parish church in Dorchester, Massachusetts. This reverie influenced my decisions to tell something of what four priests are doing for the Church at their posts in the most northeasterly, southwesterly, southeasterly, and northwesterly parishes with which I am acquainted. There are other parishes in the United States geographically situated further in these four directions, but my knowledge concerning them is hearsay. Scrutinizing the Diocesan map of the United States, beneath the glass top of my desk, a spin of my pencil stopped with its point toward the Northeast. Thus, I begin with the story of Father Frank Candon of St. Patrick's Parish, near the Canadian border, at Fairfield, Vermont.

This livewire rural pastor wrote a letter, which arrived here today, containing the names of 36 people recommended as members of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Father Frank knows people, because he is ever interested in all their problems. He can tell you how many cattle they have grazing in their mountain pastures, and what kind of a run they had in their maple sugar bush last season. His people depend upon maple sugar and milk to exchange for their, literally named, "daily bread." Father Frank knows more than that. He knows what philosophy of life the town's people are guided by, and how close to the True Faith others are approaching. He attends the community ham suppers, the town meetings, and

whatever is of interest to the people. He must be wary of snow slides in the bleak winter, as he goes about on his sick calls. His frequent journeys about His Heavenly Father's business, are on the mountain roads. His varied activities are preparing the way for the bringing the warmth and light of Catholic doctrines, preserved by the Church which was established on the Rock of Peter, so that in God's good time there may be more chapels for the Eucharistic Presence built on the granite hillsides of the Green Mountains of Vermont.

. . . and Southwesterly

Quite distinct with contrasting details, though identical in doctrine, is the program of an enthusiastic Texan, whom I visited at the height of last summer's heat wave. In the "cool of the afternoon," we looked at the thermometer on the shady side of a gas station in North Pleasanton. As I stepped out of Father Victor Schmidtzinsky's car, it had cooled off considerably since we came from San Antonio. It was only 104 degrees, but the heat of the day did not slow down the energetic pastor of North Pleasanton. He did delay for a few minutes in his patient kindly manner, to permit two little Mexican girls to select some used clothing from a large pile of garments in the rectory front hall. These youngsters came from a home in which there was need. Their family had been offered new clothing if they would join the newly established sectarian chapel with its air conditioned educational building (surely a temptation in the hot and humid weather). The diploma-mill-ordained preacher at the chapel wore cowboy boots as glossy as any ever worn by a cavalry officer. The clothes of this heretical preacher made him an oustanding figure among the Mexicans of the district, for his wordrobe was paid for by the eastern office of a sectarian missionary board. In their simplicity, the Mexican people of the neighborhood and on the outskirts of the town were not deceived by one who appealed to them in their Spanish tongue. Father Victor's broken Spanish with English interjections was what they preferred, when seeking spiritual consolation.

When evening came, my host suggested that I might like to take a rest while he went out into the country to instruct some converts. Yet, he was quite evidently pleased when I told him that I should like to accompany him on his apostolic journey. In one of these homes the husband worked until sundown in the fields, and then did chores around the ranch buildings. After his supper, he and his wife received instructions from the Padre who drove 15 miles along the serpentine sandy roads where the branches of the mesquite trees

brushed against the car. That evening, I heard of what happened during the previous instruction period. With an apology, the rancher's wife had interrupted Father Victor's lesson to ask her husband to investigate why the dog was barking so furiously. Her husband said that "It must be the 17-year locusts" which irritated the dog, and asked that the lesson be continued. As Father Victor continued with his instructions, the dog continued with her barking, more and more furiously. Then the Padre suggested that an investigation be made. The rancher cautiously looked of the door, and immediately below the threshold discovered a coiled rattlesnake. With his gun, which was kept hanging just inside the door, he blew off the head of the snake and the catechism instructions were promptly resumed. Rattlesnakes were something quite ordinary in this rancher's life, but instructions in the True Faith were quite decidedly good news. It occurred to me then, and many times since, that Father Victor's instructions, in the home of that convert and elsewhere, had inflicted many injuries on the head of the same serpent which deceived our first parents in the Garden of Paradise. It is nothing short of the truth to say that each time we preach our Catholic doctrine, we are crushing the head of the wicked serpent, who so cunningly leads men into sin.

Last year the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine office published the news that Father Victor's parish had the largest number of converts in the rural areas of the Archdiocese. This might not have been so if he had waited for the converts to come to his rectory and ask to meet a priest. Father Victor had gone out into the highways and byways and (if it be permitted to use this figure of speech in torrid Texas), he broke the ice with his "Howdy, Pardner," at meetings where ranchers gather to study soil conservation methods and discuss the price of cattle. Father discussed these subjects with them intelligently, and then told them of the higher values, the things pertaining to the soul.

Northwesterly ...

My travels toward the Northwest ended at Great Falls, Montana, where I visted Ohio-born Father Martin Whalen, Diocesan Director of Rural Life Activities for the Great Falls Diocese. When the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine meetings were over, Father Marty drove me out to his parish church at Belt, in the wheat growing country, a type of agriculture which determines that his parishioners live great distances apart. His three missions take care of people living in the villages of the abandoned mining regions, where, once, silver and lead mining gave a livelihood to many. The sun was setting, and countless

black and white magpies were chattering in the cliffs of the canyon at Monarch, as we visited the little chapel where Mass is said on weekdays, because it is impossible for one priest to say Mass on Sunday for all his parishioners in four scattered localities. Leaving the chapel we called on one of the backsliding parishioners, where the pastor urged him to get to Mass on time, lest his insistence on the "three principal parts" of the Mass might be a source of scandal to some of the newly baptized converts. Many others in the villages have been won over by the friendly spirit of this "shepherd of Belt Valley." And, if it were not for the irregular marriages, they would have long since belonged to the Catholic congregation. With his long-range outlook, Father Marty said, "Someday, we may convert their children." In another place, enthusiastic young members of the Catholic youth group told of their joy in following the planned programs given to them by Father Whalen. The enjoyable meetings conducted by the youth gave them an opportunity to explain the Decalogue to others, thus teaching many of these non-Catholic residents of the Little Rockies district, that there is another code, far more detailed and far superior to the "code of the hills."

. . . *and Southeasterly*

The report of activities in the remaining corner of the United States turns our attention to the citrus groves of Florida. I have never set foot in the Peninsula State, but the activity of which I write was reported to me by two migrant agriculture workers, boys born in Georgia. These two young men had served a hitch in Uncle Sam's Navy. While their ship was tied up in the Boston Navy Yard, they met two waitresses who were parishioners of my Boston assignment parish. (At the last report these four people were very successfully conducting a restaurant business at a southern vacation resort). I met these young men during the time of their terminal leave, answered their questions, provoked their curiosity to study more, and began their religious instruction. But then, before they could complete their instructions, their terminal leave and terminal pay were both gone, and they told me that they must "hit the road" for the fruit groves of Florida, to find employment. Never having seen a Catholic church nor a Catholic priest in Georgia, they asked me if it might be possible for them to find Catholic churches outside big cities like Boston. I assured them that there were priests in the southern states, but that they might be few and far between. I urged them to inquire in the vicinity where they found work.

Two weeks later, I received letters from Florida, telling me that they had found a priest, who in-

vited them to come whenever they could spare the time, late at night or on rainy days, when there was no work in the fruit grove. Eventually, these two young men returned and presented certificates of their Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. They had been assisted in their course of instruction by priests in many places, from the citrus grove sections of Florida to the tobacco field regions of Canada. These new Catholics had benefited by a very practical demonstration of the Unity and Universality of the Church. They told of the cordial and unselfish manner in which priests answered their questions, and aided them to become members of this Organization, "which gives you the same answers no matter where you ask them." The Unity of Catholic doctrine had surprised them because of their earlier experiences hearing the varying opinions among preachers who interpreted the Bible in ways which were often opposing.

Our Church is ever aware that, according to God's plan to provide for all men, wherever men are producing raw materials to be processed for use as necessities of life, or luxuries to give bodily comfort, there should be adequate provision for their spiritual welfare. It is the desire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that there be a Eucharistic Altar with a priest to make it possible, for participation in the New Law of the Mass, and the sharing in the merits of the Redemption through the reception of the Sacraments, by all members of the human race. Our American Bishops are faced with a problem as to how they can best distribute their burden to their priests engaged in this undermanned campaign, to preach the complete Gospel story to the American people. Recalling the words of Our Lord, "And the sheep follow him, because they know his voice," the Hierarchy assigns twentieth century spiritual sheperds to Eucharistic outposts, to feed the lambs of Christ, to go out in search of those who have strayed, and to carry on the spiritual roundup of the "sheep that have no shepherd," the unchurched Americans, unbranded by any indelible Sacramental character, to call and guide them into the one fold of the Good Shepherd.

There would be no heathens, were we such Christians as we ought to be. Paul was but a man, yet how many did he draw after him! If we were all such as he, how many worlds might we bring to give testimony to God.

St. John Chrysostom

Practical Points on Abortion Cases

D. E. Kelly, r. n. and Rev. Edward Hayes

ROBERT Burns once spoke of the value of seeing ourselves as others see us. There is also a value in being able to see life as other people see it. As soon as a person achieves this rather rare state of mind, he becomes known as an "understanding person," and his influence is thereby increased.

It is the purpose of this article to help priests to see abortion through the eyes of the medical profession, who are confronted with the same problem.

At the outset let us clear up a confusion of terms. In the public mind, the term "miscarriage" indicates involuntary expulsion of a non-viable fetus, and "abortion" indicates a willfull expulsion. In medical terminology the word "miscarriage" is almost never used, and the term "abortion" has a very broad meaning.

Abortion is the premature ejection, deliberate or accidental, threatened or complete, of a non-viable fetus.

Lay misunderstanding of medical terminology often gives rise to difficulty and confusion. For example, certain female patients upon admission to a hospital are often startled and offended when required to sign a statement of this nature:

> "I the undersigned, a patient applying for admission to ——— Hospital, believe that I am in a condition of Abortion. I hereby declare that neither the attending physician nor any person employed by or connected with the said hospital has knowingly performed any act which may have contributed to the induction of the abortion."

Miss Kelly is assistant supervisor of the operating room in St. Michael's Hospital, Newark, N. J. *Father Hayes* is presently writing a book on Medical Ethics. He is the author of the recently published *Three Keys to Happiness.*

Hospitals require this signing as a formality to protect themselves from possible legal complications.

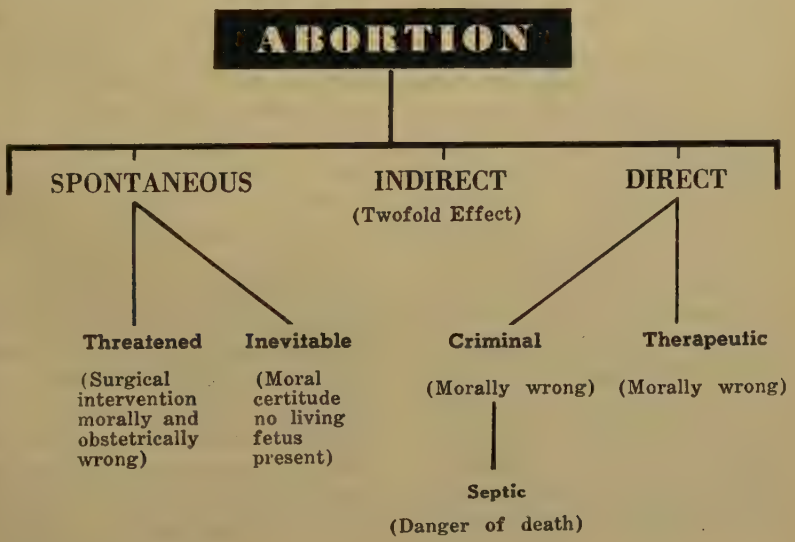
The exact meaning of the term abortion in the medical sense can sometimes even confuse priests who are not familiar with hospital terminology. Such confusion could very easily lead to an embarrassing situation between priest and patient; the priest laboring under the impression that the woman is possibly guilty of a moral wrong resulting in excommunication, when in fact no such situation exists.

Abortion may be divided into *three major classifications*: (a) spontaneous ("miscarriage"), (b) indirect, and (c) direct. Spontaneous abortions may be either threatened or inevitable; direct abortions may be either criminal or therapeutic.

Spontaneous Abortion

(a) "*Spontaneous abortion* is that which results from accident or disease." It is the expulsion of a fetus not produced intentionally. It may occur in one out of seven or eight pregnancies, usually during the first three months. Spontaneous abortions are most often due to glandular abnormalities or generalized infections such as pneumonia, influenza and syphilis. Sometimes vitamin deficiencies are a cause. Women who come into contact with radiation such as X-ray are in danger of abortion. Contrary to common belief, falls, blows and overexertion are rarely a factor.

When there is bleeding, the outcome of which is doubtful, the abortion is known as a *threatened*



abortion. On the other hand, when it is quite certain that the fetus will be expelled, the term *inevitable* abortion is used.

If the spontaneous abortion is merely threatened, in most cases bed rest and appropriate medications are the only treatments indicated. Termination by curettage, which is sometimes advised in this case, would be morally as well as obstetrically wrong.

If a spontaneous abortion seems to be inevitable, that is, the cervix is dilating of its own accord, and the patient is hemorrhaging and is in immediate danger of bleeding to death, surgical intervention is indicated. The operation is referred to as dilation and curettage ("D and C"). This presents a theoretical moral problem, but in practice it is easily resolved.

The moral problem is this: Surgical intervention is licit if the placenta has become completely detached, because then the fetus has already expired by reason of lack of oxygen. But before the placenta is detached, curettage would constitute a direct attack on the life of the fetus. There is no way in a specific case to determine the exact state of the placenta.

This moral dilemma is solved in practice by statistics. By the time the patient is brought to the operating room, the fetus has almost always been expelled. And of the rare few that have not been expelled, the fetus is almost always dead. Therefore the doctor is morally certain that there is no living fetus present.

Swift death by exsanguination (severe hemorrhage) threatens the mother, and in order to save her life the doctor proceeds upon the basis of his moral certitude.

The code of the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada states that a procedure primarily designed to empty the uterus is permissible when the physician is "reasonably sure that the fetus is already dead or already detached." ("Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Hospitals")

So we see that the difficulty presented in moral books regarding severe hemorrhage of a pregnant uterus holds no moral terrors. The solution is so simple and universal that Catholic hospitals proceed upon such cases without so much as a thought that there is a problem. No matter what an inevitable abortion may mean in theory, in modern medical practice it indicates prompt dilation and curettage.

Indirect Abortion

(b) *Indirect* abortion is that which takes place following an operation which is essential in saving the life of the mother. The fetus is in no way directly attacked, and the loss of the fetal life is a secondary and unintentional consequence.

The removal of an acutely in-

fected appendix might be necessary in saving a mother's life, but there is great risk to the life of the fetus. Surgery at this time is permissible by reason of the principle of the twofold effect: the act is morally indifferent, it produces a good effect which does not follow from the evil effect, the motive is good, and the good effect at least equals the evil which may result.

Direct Abortion

(c) A *direct* abortion is a deliberate termination of pregnancy, the only purpose being the destruction of the fetus. Under this classification would fall criminal and therapeutic abortions.

"*Criminal* abortion is one which is done because a child is not desired and the termination of the pregnancy is not necessary for the preservation of health or life." (McFadden: "Medical Ethics")

Criminal abortion may be either self-induced or done by a professional abortionist.

Because criminal abortions are sometimes amateur and always clandestine, they often result in a generalized blood-stream infection (septicemia). The immediate dangers in these immoral procedures are hemorrhage and infection. Sterility often results. When the priest comes upon a septic abortion case, he should take immediate steps and give last rites, because such cases are almost gravely ill both spiritually and physically.

Regarding criminal abortion, "De Lee's Obstetrics for Nurses" has this to say: "Criminal abortions comprise the majority of abortions . . .Perhaps the saddest commentary on our modern civilization. . . is the increase of practice of criminal abortion. . .It is always murder, in several states legally punishable as such." Criminal abortion is therefore in ill repute morally, medically and legally.

Therapeutic abortion is an abortion induced deliberately for the purpose of saving the mother from death or ill health. There is no moral distinction between therapeutic and criminal abortion; both are a direct attack on an innocent life. The principle of twofold effect does not apply because any good which results arises by reason of the placing of an evil act.

Although morally wrong, therapeutic abortion is legal in many places. It is performed in cases of toxemia, hypertension, cardiac diseases, kidney diseases, certain types of mental diseases, pulmonary tuberculosis, and hypermesis gravidarum (pernicious vomiting).

"De Lee's Obstetrics" states that "as our medical knowledge increases, the necessity for therapeutic abortion is growing less and less and it is only in rare cases that the physician feels that the best interest of the mother, the family, and the community are served by this sacrifice." Although it is certain that the "need" is growing less and less, there are few

people who are familiar with modern medical practices who would use the word "rare" in speaking of therapeutic abortions. Indeed, this very matter is a constant source of difficulty for many Catholic nurses.

It would be well for a priest attending a non-Catholic hospital to take every opportunity to acquaint himself with all the departments of the hospitals and become a familiar figure, so that members of the staff will feel free to seek his advice and guidance. Most nurses are ready and willing to accept advice which would be for the good of their own soul and that of their patients.

If properly approached, hospital authorities are usually willing to arrange their schedules so that nurses are not required to assist at operations to which they have objections in conscience.

To summarize:

Abortion in the medical sense is any expulsion of a fetus before viability either deliberate or accidental. It may be classified as spontaneous, direct or indirect.

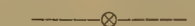
Spontaneous abortion may be either threatened or inevitable. If threatened, rest and medications are indicated. If inevitable, surgical intervention is indicated and is morally permissible by reason of moral certitude that no viable fetus is present.

Direct abortion is a deliberate termination of pregnancy. It is intrinsically evil because it is an attack on an innocent being. It may be classified as criminal or therapeutic.

Criminal abortion is one done simply because the child is not desired. Complications are hemorrhage, septicemia and sterility. Criminal abortion is always illegal and immoral.

Therapeutic abortion is deliberately induced to save the life or health of the mother. It is legal and "medically ethical," but morally wrong, and therefore a frequent problem for Catholics working in non-Catholic institutions.

Indirect abortion is a secondary effect of an operation necessary in saving the life of the mother, not however through the medium of destroying fetal life. It is morally permissible by application of the principle of twofold effect.



"The Church demands that future priests be instructed in Philosophy 'according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor', since, as we know the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly preeminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with divine revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith, and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress." —**"Humani Generis"**

The Soul Of The Apostolate

Dom Chautard

Take my advice and do not hesitate to aim as high as possible; you will be astonished at the results. Let me explain.

Do not have as your ideal to give your young men a choice of decent amusements, which will draw them away from forbidden pleasures and dangerous occasions, nor merely to give them a coat of varnish of Christianity, by a routine attendance at Mass or by their going to the Sacraments, in a merely passable way, at long intervals.

Launch out into the deep. Have the ambition of getting some of these young men, no matter what trouble it costs, to take the energetic resolution of living as fervent Christians, that is to say, to make a practice of morning meditation, a habit of daily Mass if possible, a short spiritual reading, and as a matter of course, frequent and fervent Communion. Devote all your care to giving to this chosen band a great love of our Lord, the spirit of prayer, of self-denial, of keeping watch over self, in a word, of solid virtue. Develop no less in their souls a hunger for the Blessed Eucharist. Then, gradually work up these lads to influence their companions; train these young apostles to be straightforward, devoted, full of tact, kind, keen, manly; with no narrow piety, never, under pretext of zeal, falling into the sorry crankiness of spying on their comrades.

Before two years have gone by, you will tell me whether there is still need of sounding brass or of stage scenery to make a goodly capture of fish.

Age Is No Barrier

Rev. Frank J. Sullivan

In a recent talk on marriage, Bishop Sheen spoke of how the priest, though a celibate, can impress his personality upon others, thus producing offspring who are molded after his mental, or spiritual likeness.

That this is true, every priest, every seminarian, will have to admit. For one thing, in every case—with but a small margin for an occasional exception—there has been, someplace along the line, a priest who made a great and favorable impression upon our mind. True as it is that parents play an important role in the formation of a child's character as well as the formation of his body, it is equally true that the priest is similarly privileged.

No more clearly is this evidenced than in the case of the young man or woman who approaches you, shyly confessing the desire to enter the religious state—someone, perhaps, whom you had baptized many years ago; a member, perhaps, of your Catholic Doctrine Study Club; a Catholic Actionist from the Cells you helped organize; a patient, maybe, from the hospital to which, from time to time, you went, either to administer the Last Rites or merely to visit the sick, impressing, at the same time your personality upon someone else, generally all unknown to yourself.

The life of a celibate has its consolations, too many to be overlooked, but none so strong as having one of "your own" express the desire to become a priest. This—what might be termed a "spiritual sonship"—is one of the most priceless treasures of your priesthood,

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Father Sullivan, a belated vocation, was recently ordained at St. John's Missionary Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas. He served four years overseas in the Navy before entering the Seminary.

one of the richest treasures of your years of work in the Vineyard.

It is a thing so sublime, so sacred, so wondrous in its effects, that it must ever remain a matter between God and yourself, something you cannot possibly share with others—possibly because it is something you cannot suitably express.

Beyond the joy itself of hearing this confession made, there is another joy which, perhaps, too few pastors know. Probably because too few seem to understand the peculiar forms it may take.

For example, you've a man in your parish who is, say, twenty-seven years old. He is extremely faithful in fulfilling his religious duties. He goes to daily Mass, receives Holy Communion daily, and usually puts in an appearance at all, or at least most, of the religious services that are held in the parish, as well as at meetings and discussion-groups. In short, he is "a good Catholic". Single, unmarried, he can, perhaps, devote more of his time to church affairs than his married companions. He may, or may not, belong to the Knights of Columbus, but he is certain to belong to the Holy Name. There can be no doubting his goodness, or his sincerity.

But there have been times when, speaking with him, you have felt he was about to speak to you, say something really important. You waited, not knowing what to say, then the moment was gone and you went on with what you'd been saying in the first place.

All the while, he is thinking: "Why make a fool of myself? Why should I leave myself open like this, asking to be laughed at? Sure, I want to be a priest. But who's going to pay any attention to a fellow who's been out of school for so many years? Who'd believe a fellow who's knocked around the way I have, could want to become a priest?"

While you are wondering, he is wasting time. And the pathetic part of it is, he is mistaken, he isn't too old. And you would be the first to tell him this—if only you knew this was what he was thinking, what he was afraid to blurt out.

It is, without a doubt, a touchy situation. But a normal one, especially in the case of a man who's been in the armed forces. True, in some cases the desire may spring from an emotional source, being but what might be termed a sublimated desire to escape the horrors of war he had come to know. However, this wouldn't hold true in all cases. Some of them are bound to be what they seem—real vocations. And it's a pity so many of these men are afraid to speak out, afraid for fear they will be ridiculed. Of course they are mistaken. And they are being foolish in holding the words in. All that they can be told is: "Yes, its possible" or "No, it is not for you."

And, I ask you, what priest

would ever—excluding, for the moment, the obvious cases—tell a man who wanted to be a priest that it was impossible. All he need do, should he be tempted to forget this, is look at himself. He will never stop wondering why God chose him above all others, especially when so many others seemed better-suited than he. God's ways, he realizes, are not man's ways. To apply to God the guide-rule we apply to men, would be obviously insane. Trust in God, trust and the willingness to do what is demanded, this is what counts—on your part. Any priest knows this. But how can he tell the would-be priest, if he never opens his mouth, if he remains fearful of rebuff? The answer is cruelly simple: He cannot. The priest simply cannot help such a man, till he knows the man wants, and needs, his help.

You make the first move

But there is an answer, and it is this: You make the first move. No, not by talking to Joe Doaks. (For, since Joe hasn't opened his mouth, you have no way of knowing he wants to be a priest. You have to draw him out, by bringing it up first.) So in a general way, it is a good idea—particularly now—to speak of vocations to the priesthood from the pulpit, or in your discussion groups. This is often done, I am well aware; but not nearly often enough. And, in nearly every instance, no mention is ever made of the fact that, while health may prove a barrier, age never will—providing, of course, one finds a Bishop or an Order to accept him. And this is a point that ought to be stressed. If it is, I am willing to bet, you will be surprised at the results. Oh, I do not mean to say, you will suddenly find yourself beseiged, or anything like that. I do mean that God will bless your efforts in this regard by producing grace in souls, by unstopping hesitant mouths, by singling out individuals, by bringing them forward, shy, still afraid they are being presumptuous.

I know personally, though many priests do not, the terrible cost of having to make this confession. It isn't easy. It is perhaps the hardest thing I ever was called upon to do. Of course it was nonsense, and I was vaguely aware that it was, even then. However, be that as it may, the fact stands: I was afraid I'd be laughed at for wanting to become a priest. For two reasons: first, because I was a few years older than most young men who enter the seminary; second, because I had been in the service and seen, and done many things "proper" young men would not have thought of. This too, was foolish—but, at the time, I wasn't aware that it was. Had I thought of St. Augustine it might have helped. Or of the Cure D'Ars, also a belated vocation. Or any of several others, like the soldierly Ig-

natius or the saintly Pope Pius X.

Afterwards, when I entered the seminary, I discovered how foolish had been my earlier fears. At the time I experienced them, the only thing that helped overcome them was a kind and sympathetic priest. Without him, I would still doubtless be "on the outside looking in," one of those poor, sad creatures whose mind, dwelling overly much on the what-might-have-been, cannot measure up to life's challenge and who generally winds up a miserable failure in whatever he attempts, giving it only that half of his attention which his daydream has left him.

A sorry fate indeed, especially for one called to so wonderful a work. And a work which is constantly in need of greater numbers of laborers. A sad thing to think of the many who might have entered the seminary, if only they'd been able to overcome their fears.

To give a few figures, which convinced me that I wasn't in such a bad "fix," I might mention that, out of my class of twenty-seven—of whom twenty stuck it out and were ordained to the priesthood—thirteen had spent some time in the armed services, all during the Second World War, most having served overseas, and a few wearers of the Purple Heart, having been wounded while defending their country. The actual ages of my class-mates ranged from between twenty-four and thirty-six. And, incidentally, of the twenty who were left, all thirteen of the former-servicemen comprised the larger portion, not one having dropped out of the seminary. The "average" age was twenty-nine, hitting close to the the thirty mark, at the time of ordination.

The overall figures for the seminary which I attended might be worth mentioning, also. Approximately one out of every four students preparing for the priesthood was an ex-serviceman; nearly fifty out of almost two hundred seminarians.

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Times have changed since a good many priests attended the seminary; what then was the exception, seems an accepted practice, now that so many former-servicemen are studying for the priesthood. Not all of these older men are former-servicemen though; several are just "belated." In some cases, the death of his father left the young man with the burden shifted to his shoulders of supporting his mother and younger brothers and sisters. This prevented his entering the seminary. One case with which I am personally acquainted comes to mind: that of a former Parole Officer who, for nearly thirty years worked for the Ohio State Board of Education. He had always wanted to become a priest, but his father died, leaving him with a mother to support—for nearly thirty years. All this time he harbored within his breast the hope that someday, somehow, God would answer his prayer and help him become a priest. He was fifty years of age when he entered the seminary, after the death of his mother.

If the priest wishes younger brothers, spiritual sons, fellow-workers in the Vineyard, it is his duty to preach on vocations—but, if he keep in mind the natural fear and hesitancy which afflict the man of maturer years and vaster experience of human ills and evils, he will not forget to stress the fact that age is no barrier, that experience, sincere effort and trust in God can more than overcome whatever obstacles there are on the way to the sanctuary.

The young ones we want. It has always been the Church's policy to attract youths to seminaries. Perhaps it is the ideal; the Church implies that it is. But, notwithstanding this fact, experience gained can, and does prove of some value, at times a tremendous value. And men, older men, who have gone through Hell and emerged with a burning desire for Heaven, such men can well prove worthy priests, kind confessors, understanding and truly wise counsellors. Is all this to be wasted because of their fear of failure? Is all this to be thrown away? Is all this to be wasted because we fail to advance the hope they are looking for?

All such men need is a helping hand, and if it isn't given them, we cannot help but know that, though they may be partially to blame, we have some share in the responsibility for their failure, a failure which may well have been more than a mere personal one. It isn't age that matters, it's the will to serve God—not as we ourselves wish to serve Him, necessarily, but as He wishes us to serve Him. The fields are white, even unto the harvest, but the laborers few, all too few for the work. Would we, by our neglect to mention that age is no barrier, drive future workers away? It is a thought well worth pondering and a theme worth preaching upon.

God's Blue Answer To The Reds

Rev. John Mowatt and Ellis Schweitzer

IN 1918 the red flags of communism flew over the great city of Moscow once called the Third Rome. The old Russian Empire had fallen and a new and terrible rule had taken over the vast Russian lands and her people. Whereever the red banners were seen there followed death and destruction. Russia was now truly red—red with the blood of her own people. Gone were the glories of the past. Her people saw their beloved shrine of Our Lady of Iver torn from the gates of the Kremlin and a large sign put in its place which read: "RELIGION IS THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE". Churches were closed by the thousands and the bishops, priests, monks and nuns put to death or driven into the vastness of Siberia to perish in the concentration camps.

All hope for any recovery was lost. Deprived of their clergy, their churches closed or destroyed, the Russians faced a future dark and dreary. In the secret confines of their homes they gathered around their holy icons of Christ and His Mother and begged for deliverance.

Russian Conversion Promised

The prayers of the Russian people were not in vain. In Fatima Our Blessed Lady promised the conversion of Russia and peace in the world. She had a weapon which she recommended to be used—the HOLY ROSARY. Her request was simple enough . . . to

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pray the Rosary and to do penance.

Many of her devoted clients heeded her request but not enough responded. A second world war followed and the banners of red moved westward. Poland, Western Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, Albania, all the Baltic States and even part of Germany fell into the grasp of the 'red monster'. The Catholic Church suffered the most in this terrible purge. The Greek Catholic Church of Western Ukraine and Romania has been completely annihilated. And what are we doing about it?

On the other side of the ocean, in the United States, a valiant, humble and holy priest decided to do something about it and so in the spring of 1947 in his own parish in Plainfield, New Jersey, he began the BLUE ARMY. This army was a movement of prayer and devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. This movement was destined by Our Lady to spread from this single parish church and become the largest Fatima organization in the world today.

Answers The Call

Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, who ranks first among all prelates after Pope Pius XII, has cited the Blue Army as a means toward world peace, saying, "The Blue Army is a response to the demands of the Blessed Virgin at Fatima."

"Today everyone desires peace," he declared, "but true peace presupposes the conversion of the impious and, before this, our own renovation. The Blue Army enters into the spirit of the Church in working to bring about a personal living . . . of the consecration which the Sovereign Pontiff has willed to make of the entire world, and most particularly of the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

The Blue Army, said Cardinal Tisserant, "constitutes a sort of spiritual mobilization for a most precise objective, namely, the conversion of the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and their satellites."

Blessed By Pope

In May of 1950, Father Colgan was received in a private audience by Pope Pius XII, who said, "As the world leader against communism, I bless you and all members of the Blue Army."

The surge in membership is aided, said Father Colgan, by increasing activity in 33 countries of the world where the Blue Army is known to have become established. The organization, dedicated to the conversion of Russia and world peace through prayer and sacrifice, now completely surrounds the Soviet Union territorially.

Touching the "Iron Curtain" on all sides are countries in which

Blue Army members are active; on the west are Germany, Italy and Switzerland; on the east, Alaska, China, Japan and Korea; and on the south, India and Malaya. In the heart of Russia, itself, the Blue Army is active. The Pilgrim Virgin statue of Our Lady of Fatima, enshrined in Moscow, is in a building within view of the Kremlin.

Other lands in which the crusade "on which the sun never sets" is active, Father Colgan reports, are: the United States, Canada, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, The Philippines, Ceylon, Lebanon, The Saar, Lichtenstein, Austria, Guatamala, Cuba, Africa, South Africa, England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium and Australia.

"These are countries from which we have heard and know definitely that the Blue Army is active," Father Colgan explained, "and there are undoubtedly countries from which we have received no word."

Heeds Pontiff's Appeal

The Blue Army throughout Europe is taking to heart the Pope's "pointing out the great need of Our Lady by the proclamation of the Marian Year" and the stressing the need for a militant force which the Pope cited in his address to the Catholic Actionists of Italy last December 8th.

The Pope, in addressing that group at the opening of the Marian Year, referred to "a great battle now being fought in the world ... not with the destruction of houses and the massacre of men ... but a war under a thousands forms: evil against good, hate against love, bad morals against purity, egoism against social justice, violence against peace and tyranny against liberty."

The Blue Army is taking up the arms presented at Fatima for achieving victory in this great struggle: the Rosary, the Scapular, sacrifice and reparation.

Unifying Force for Europe

A step in the direction of European unity was made when Blue Army delegates from eleven countries agreed to have an information center in Paris.

The Paris center is supported by funds from the national Blue Army committees of each of the participating countries. These decisions were made at a Blue Army Convention at Bonn, Germany, on September 14th and 15th, 1953, at which the delegates also voted to appoint Rev G. A. Wetter, S.J., rector of the Russian College, Rome, to contact the highest authorities of Marian organizations in order to coordinate their activities on the European level. When that is done, the same coordination will be possible on a national level.

The Congress also voted to hold Blue Army demonstrations on the parish and diocesan levels throughout the Marian Year.

Representatives of the Blue

Army attended the Bonn Meeting from Germany, France, England, Scotland, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Lichtenstein, The Saar and Lebanon.

To the American National Commander of the Blue Army, John M. Haffert, Cardinal Tisserant wrote at the opening of the Marian Year: "I am very favorable to your movement, as you know, and I hope it will have good influence on the people, bringing them to prayer, and prayer for others, for the persecuted and martyrs behind the Iron Curtain . . . my best wishes for the success of your activities. I am praying for you and the members of the Blue Army, which I bless from my heart."

The visions of Our Lady of Fatima were seen in 1917 by three small children. Only one of them is still living. She is now a cloistered Carmelite nun, Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart, in Coimbra, Portugal.

In October, 1952, Haffert, who has been privileged to see her twice, told her of the spread of the Blue Army throughout the world, saying: "It would seem that Our Lady is lifting up apostles of the Blue Army everywhere."

"Yes," the nun who saw Our Lady of Fatima replied, "and the conversion of Russia may be sooner than is expected."

Conditions

The only requirements for membership in the Blue Army are that a person promise to say *part of the Rosary* properly *each* day, wear the *Brown Scapular* of Mt. Carmel as a sign of consecration and offer up the sacrifices demanded by daily duty. They are urged, in addition, to make the five first Saturdays and wear an outward mark of blue, (a ribbon, string or pin), as a sign of their pledge.

International Headquarters Near Site of Apparitions

Quite appropriately, the international headquarters for this world-wide crusade, the Blue Army, are near the site of the visions at Fatima. A new East-West Shrine, which will be permanent Blue Army headquarters, will rise next to the Basilica at Fatima during this Marian Year.

The chapel and assembly hall of the proposed structure, which will combine Roman and Byzantine architecture as a sign of the union of the East and West in peace at the very spot where conversion of Russia was promised by Our Lady in 1917, is slated for completion by October, 1954. Temporary Blue Army international headquarters were established at a small house in Fatima in October, 1952.

The new structure at Fatima will be built of white stone, quarried on the spot, on a knoll beside and slightly to the rear of the Basilica. It is to be about 176 feet long, nearly 35 feet wide, and three and a half stories high. The

chapel and hall, intersecting the center of the building, and wings at each end will give the appearance of a large "M'. The wings will be about 54 feet long and 28 feet wide.

The main entrance is to be fronted by six large pillars decorated to represent the six Fatima apparitions and arranged in a semicircle, supporting Roman arches. Inside, behind the columns on the main floor, will be the meeting hall with a removable wall separating the hall from the Russian chapel. When combined, the chapel and hall will be nearly 85 feet long.

Altars Unite East and West

The main altar in the chapel is to be designed according to the Russian rite of the Catholic Church, and four Roman altars will be placed in side chapels, uniting the Eastern and Western rites of the sacrifice of the Mass under one roof. The chapel will be surmounted by a large Byzantine dome which will be visible for many miles as pilgrims approach Fatima.

The house will provide 61 bedrooms, 49 of them with private baths. The attic will provide a 56-bed dormitory. Besides the hall, chapel, and bedrooms, the main floor will have administrative and secretarial offices. The basement will provide garage, laundry, large and small refectories, kitchen, food preparations and storage rooms and various other rooms along with living quarters for personnel.

Father Colgan describes the proposed building as "A center of International Apostleship for Europe and America and as a center of devotion and hope for the oppressed peoples under Communism. We do this on nothing but our faith . . . our realization of the great importance of speeding the conversion of Russia, and our trust in the willingness of people to support this project so intimately tied to the conversion of Russia."

Father Colgan said the Blue Army will use this new house at Fatima "for world congresses and for constant reception of pilgrims from all nations who are working towards fulfillment of Our Lady's great promise of the conversion of Russia and world peace."

Marian Year Rally and Pilgrimage

A Blue Army pilgrimage for the Marian Year will be held in September and October, 1954, and will include and audience with the Holy Father in Rome, visits to Father Pio, the Holy House of Loretto, La Salette, the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart in Toulouse, and three days at Lourdes. The tour will climax with a stay of several days at Fatima, during which the International Blue Army Headquarters will be dedicated, and the 37th anniversary of the "Miracle of the Sun" will be observed on October 13th with hundreds of thousands of other pilgrims.

In order to make the pilgrimage within the reach of many, the Blue Army formed a pilgrimage club by which all costs of the trip will be mutually shared. Membership is handled through the National Blue Army Headquarters, Ave Maria Institute, Washington, New Jersey.

Last July 12th through the 16th, a Congress of Blue Army delegates from all parts of this country and Canada was held at St. Mary's Church, Plainfield, New Jersey. The Most Rev. Thomas A. Boland, S.T.D., Archbishop of Newark, N.J., presided at the opening session and the Most Rev. George W. Ahr, S.T.D., Bishop of Trenton, N.J., offered the Solemn Pontifical Mass on closing day. Pope Pius XII sent his Pontifical Blessing.

To keep alive the work of the Congress, the delegates agreed on 15 committees to handle various phases of the apostolate, and these are now active throughout America. "Cells" are being established in more than a hundred cities, and Father Colgan publishes a special, bi-monthly bullentin for Cell leaders.

On May 23rd, the Blue Army will hold its major U.S. Marian Year meeting at Carnegie Hall, New York City. Archbishop Boland will preside. Father Colgan and John Haffert will be speakers. A statue sent by the Bishop of Fatima will be used to re-crown Our Lady "Queen of the World", (as she was crowned by Pope Pius XII, through a Cardinal Legate, at Fatima in 1946).

PRAYER MAKES A PARISH

The parish is called "the basic cell of social life because it is the center of public prayer." While lauding the efforts at offering means of satisfying justified desires for culture or relaxation, and admitting the interest in Catholic Action and the everyday realities which condition the development of the individual and of civil life, the Holy Father pointed out recently that the center of parish life is the church, where Divine life begins in the baptistry, is renewed in the confessional and strengthened at the Communion rail, where marriages are consecrated and the bodies of our loved ones receive to pray. It is prayer that makes strong parishes which are welded together to form the largest, most functional and most successful organization on God's earth—not the Godless United Nations—but His Church.

The Holy Father's Plea For A More Vigorous Parish Life

HUMANITY today has no other solution for its ills but "to build the world anew in the spirit of Christ," Pope Pius XII declared in a pre-Lenten message to the pastors and Lenten preachers of Rome.

"Let men in high places come to realize the absolute necessity of this," the Holy Father admonished, "because by ignoring God or denying Him they will build even more precariously than at present."

Pope Pius declared that while the problem of spiritual rebuilding is "pressing as never before," priests should view it "without pessimism, but also clearly and objectively."

Two questions were posed by the Pope for the guidance of the priests in Rome. For how many people and families in the parish is Christ a living reality? How many pray to Him, live by and through Him?

"True," he said, "all believe more or less after a fashion. Very many have ben baptized, and have made First Communion also. They have been married in church and want to have, in God's good time, the Last Sacraments and a church burial."

"But," the Pontiff added, "it is undeniable that outside the group, more or less numerous, of fervent Catholics, you have simply the well-disposed, the indifferent, and even the hostile."

"Yet we know, dear sons, that you can reach every soul, even the most distant, the most remote and the most obstinate, by your prayers and sacrifices for them."

"You can, for example, mobilize the children and the suffering of

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Following is a portion of the message directed recently by Pope Pius XII to the parish priests and Lenten preachers of Rome.

your parishes, that they may cause a shower of graces to fall upon the souls entrusted to your care. Above all, every morning you can offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for all."

The Pope emphasized the necessity of also utilizing the apostolate of the laity, "which, as you yourselves know from your own experience, can become a powerful source of good."

"Therefore, it is necessary to find these souls in order to use them after they have been solidly trained."

"Find out how many there are, where they are, what they are capable of doing, where they may be effectively employed."

"Rely on the members of Catholic Action, whose four branches We ardently desire to be found in every parish; marshal along with it other types of organizations, without neglecting those who do not like to be members of organizations, but who can render precious service to use them in individual projects or in additional works of zeal."

"Once auxiliaries have been found and known, they must be trained.

"And here it is necessary to observe that the time spent in preparing collaborators is not time lost."

"Those who will help you in the apostolate cannot be considered as a "burden," even though one may not wish to compare them to the weight of wings which facilitate rather than hinder movement."

"Of course, their "human" formation is not to be neglected, all the more since a complete development of natural gifts, far from being heroism of virtue, makes apostolic action easier as well as more effective."

"You will have particular care for the "intellectual" formation of your collaborators, seeing to it especially that they have clear ideas as a result of a truly profound knowledge of religion."

"You well know how great a need there is today of those who know how to speak, even in public, in order to enlighten so many minds and to defend the Church from the attacks which these times it is not unusual to hear on every side: in the market place, in offices, in factories, on the streets."

"But, above all, take care of their spiritual formation. Have them put on Jesus Christ; nourish them with Him; make of His Divine Heart a model from which they may draw inspiration in their thoughts, their affections, their desires, their words and actions. Have them surrender their hearts in Jesus and in the arms of His Heavenly Mother Mary."

"Then you must actually use them. Some will point out to you particular material and spiritual needs; others will open for you the doors of a soul closed to any priestly contact; there are those who in your name will carry help to the poor, who will visit the sick

or share in some sorrow or some joy.

"You need help in teaching catechism to the children; the apostolate must be exercised in factories, in schools, in large apartment houses not only by one's presence, but also by one's actions; there must be someone to initiate and bring into action, under your guidance and with your blessing, a band of "lay missionaries."

"Be exacting in pointing out their goals to them and be constant in encouraging them toward their realization."

"As is clear, they will not have to give orders, but neither may they be reduced to merely carrying out orders. Therefore, leave them sufficient scope for developing a spirit of eager and fruitful initiative; this will also make them happier, more alert and ready to collaborate with you."

"This, beloved sons, is what We wished to say to you, in this difficult and arduous hour, about your apostolic work. On it We invoke an abundance of Divine favors, in token of which, from the depths of Our heart, We impart to you the Apostolic Blessing."

A SUGGESTION

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quid in casu?

REV. WILLIAM F. ALLEN, D.C.L.

What did the present Holy Father have to say about the Rhythm Theory a few years ago? Is unrestricted use of the system perfectly moral?

A. Our present Holy Father spoke very pointedly about the Rhythm Theory on Oct. 9, 1951 at a Congress of Italian Midwives. He did not give forth any new doctrine but clarified a few obscure and much controverted points. The Rhythm in itself is not immoral. It does not contravene nature's laws. The married couple omits the use of its rights at certain times and uses them when they choose. The Pope declared that the exclusive and enduring use of the system during one's married life without a serious, justifying reason would be sinful. "To embrace the married state, continuously to make use of the faculty proper to it and lawful in it alone, and on the other hand to *withdraw always* and deliberately *with no serious reasons* from its primary obligation would be a sin against the very meaning of conjugal life." To use the Rhythm *temporarily* for a good, sufficient reason would be lawful. Some such reasons might be: illness in the family, serious financial distress, housing shortage, enforced absence, lack of steady gainful employment etc. Its temporary use without a good reason would be venially sinful and some place a limit of five years before the sin in this case becomes serious and mortal. The basis for the serious mortal fault would be the deliberate circumvention of the primary obligation of the married state and the very meaning of conjugal life.

Recently I was asked by a prospective convert for the basis of serious sin in the eating of meat on Fridays. Is it the sole authority and will of the Church?

A. It is conceded that unless a person is legitimately excused from the law of abstinence does constitute a serious sin. Its gravity is derived from the importance of the goal to be attained through the law, namely, the practice of the virtues of penance and mortification so necessary to the Christian way of life. Abstinence is considered a very efficacious means to the goal and Moralists feel that the violation of the law renders the attainement of those virtues very difficult particularly after the

above-mentioned quantity has been eaten. The mind of the Church is reflected in this teaching. The same line of reasoning is followed in other instances. The theft, for example, of a small, inconsequential sum of money can become a serious sin if such a sum was so important to its rightful owner that its absence puts his livelihood in jeopardy. The goal of the law fixes the standards by which the violation must be judged. In much the same way, any violation of the virtue does not become serious until the common good of society is severely tried. Again, the mere breaking and entering in the night time, regardless of any theft involved, is serious in civil law because it constitutes a severe threat to the welfare of the society. All this is written to make clear the point: an action simple in itself becomes serious and important in relationship to the goal to which it is assigned.

May a husband seek the copula and render it if he is morally certain that his wife intends (1) *to expel the seed by a douche immediately after the act* (2) *or that she has inserted a false vagina to be discarded after the copula* (3) *that she wears a pessary to support a tipped or easily displaced womb which may act as a contraceptive also?*

A. As to (1) the authors are in agreement that the husband may seek and render debitum even if he suspects that his wife is going to expel the seed immediately after the act. They reason that the marital act is correctly performed by the husband from start to finish. What is sinful comes after the act has been performed and proceeds from the wife's own malice. The husband is held to persuade the wife from the evil act but his duty in charity does not oblige him to abstain from having his marital relations; this, we presume, would constitute serious inconvenience. He is placed in the same category as a wife whose husband is given to withdrawal and the more common opinion permits her to both seek and render. The same would apply today if the wife, against the wishes of her husband, were to use a powder or a jelly in the vagina to kill the potency of the seed. In either case the malice of the act is entirely on the part of the wife and does not enter into the act of marital love until this is completed.

As to (2) the weight of theological opinion would deny the right to the husband to seek or to render if a false vagina with a closed end, would be worn by the wife. The act is evil from its inception since the seed is placed in a closed vagina and hence this is contrary to nature's procedure. Most theologians compare this case to the one in which the husband wears a contraceptive and in which all cooperation is forbidden to the wife.

In case number (3) we must remark that doctors prescribe a pessary, a diaphragm which is entirely open and which supports the womb and adds to the chances

of conception by maintaining excellent position of the uterus. There is also one whose neck fits up into the womb with a very thin perforation its full length. No fault can be found with either of these instruments since the seed can reach its natural destination.

Perhaps in the difficulty proposed the emphasis is meant on the contraceptive nature of the device. The more common opinion on the closed pessary in the vagina of the wife would deny the husband the right to seek or to render for the same reason as in case (2) namely, the vagina is not truly a canal leading to the womb and therefore is contrary to nature's laws. Vermeersch, once of the contrary view, favored in his later edition the more common solution but not without some misgivings. He remarked that for the canonical consummation of marriage, the uterus does not have to be open and that possibly an open uterus is not of the essence of the marital act for its morality. Merkelbach unwilling to give a final, definite answer, makes the same observation and in praxi would permit the marital act under these circumstances until the Holy See authoritatively speaks on the subject. Most authors ignore the basis of the hesitancy to pronounce on the part of these two eminent theologians and simply frown upon the licity of the act.[1]

1 Cf. Vermeersch, Theol. Moralis 1933, IV, 70; Merkelbach, Questions de Castitate, 1929, 116; Piscetta-Gennaro: Elementa Theol. Moral. Torino, 1934, VII, 192.

In the last issue, the answer submitted on the Eucharistic Fast required serious inconvenience as a condition for the applying of the exemption to priests in special circumstances. Neither the Papal Constitution, nor the Instruction makes mention of this condition. What is its basis?

A. In that particular answer we followed the R.P. Hurth, S.J., since he is a consultor of the Holy Office and should know the mind and the tenor of the Instruction. He reasons that the traditional Eucharistic Fast remains in vigor (with the exception of the permission to use natural water any time), and all who can, should observe the traditional law. Such is the will of the Holy Father. At least four times in Constitution does he refer to this. The new legislation therefore is an exception to a law and must be strictly interpreted in its text and context. The new norms are not unconditional exemptions and derogation from the law. The mere fact of sickness does not entitle one to the privileges; serious inconvenience must be present; the faithful in special circumstances must prove the same before they may enjoy the exemptions. For these two categories of persons, the norms explicitly require serious inconvenience. As for priests, the words, we grant, are not in the text. But the context plainly demands something other than bare circumstances. The Law must be kept unless necessity urges otherwise; the Pope himself mentions the fact that the concessions for priests were thought

of because of the strain of modern living. Father Hurth therefore rejects blanket-concessions and asks that those who avail themselves of the exemptions should prove or show cause why they cannot be held to the still-in-effect traditional law. The sick must; the faithful must; why not the priests?

However it must be kept in mind that commentaries on this new legislation are bound to vary and this for the simple reason that some authors accept the norms as true laws while others take them as mere exceptions from a general law still in vigor.

I would like to know just when children are guilty of mortal sin in regard to purity. Noldin and other authors confuse me. For example, Noldin writes 'graviter reprehendi sunt pueri et puellae sibi invicem ex levitate vel curiositate genitalia detegentes; etsi enim in hoc, mortale non sit, castum pudorem tamen minuit atque ad ulteriora disponit et conducit.' At what age therefore do such actions become serious? and what is the obligation of the confessor to instruct and to probe in such things?

A. It is indeed difficult to answer the question directly as to the moral guilt according to age. We might insinuate the beginnings of an answer by recalling to mind the essence, so as to speak, of the sin of impurity: an act affording veneral pleasure from commotion of the genitals either perfectly, i.e. with the attainement of the action's natural goal or imperfectly i.e. not going quite to that extent. The sinful nature is derived from the use of the genitals for personal individual satisfaction whereas they were destined for the benefit of the race and for the common good of society; and this holds both for the completed act or the incompleted. In the case of the incompleted however, or imperfect actions, one must be sure that venereal pleasure was directly and surely intended and the precise appreciation will depend on just how remote or proximate such veneral pleasure was from the act. Any malicious seeking of venereal pleasure, however small, is gravely sinful.

Children up to the age of seven surely, and those not too close to puberty, not being capable of the completed act and of real venereal pleasure are presumed not to be guilty even of the 'affectus' to the sin and their acts are usually classed under 'actus impudici.' The latter external acts disposing or forming part more or less remotely with the act of complete venereal pleasure. They become mortally sinful if the person through them seeks the forbidden pleasure as his sole objective or exposes himself to undergoing a strong temptation to it or of giving consent to such pleasure arising per accidens from the actions or lastly if scandal might ensure from his actions. They are venially sinful if the person does the actions from levity or in joking manner or if is just slightly exposed to venereal

pleasure, etc. These actions must be judged in themselves and in their effect upon the persons involved because of their proper dispositions etc.

Getting back to our question: for young children and those three years away from puberty, boys or girls, the confessor should be inclined to hold them guilty of 'actus impudici' if they confess sins against the sixth commandment and most of the time these will be venial sins. For children of 12 years or above (a survey both in Europe and United States last year indicated that children learn the facts of life around 11 or 12 on an average), there is a possibility of real complete venereal pleasure along with the actus impudici of both a serious and venial nature and thus the confessor would have to ascertain more clearly the nature of the sins confessed and carefully correct and instruct the penitents as to the gravity and the means of avoiding them. His words, general attitude should convey to both categories the correct moral value of their conduct. We must remember that the Church would have confessors sins by defect rather than by excess in this domaine.

Canon 470, requires an authentic copy of the parish registers to be sent each year to the Chancery. What is the purpose of the regulation which appears to be disregarded everywhere?

A. The Code canon 470 par. 3 imposes the above obligation on pastors and in the minds of the commentators it is a precautionary measure lest the parish books be lost by fire, theft etc. Chelodi remarks that the mere checking of the registers by the Chancery does not suffice to fulfill this law. He also notes that the law had been in force in Germany for almost a century before the Code and that its utility was manifest when the ruins of World War I raised havoc with so many churches and rectories. In Germany some bishops for want of space in the diocesan archives order the copies to be kept in the Deaneries. Microfilming would be the answer today for space deficiencies. The writer is under the impression that New York State has a similar prescription about birth records: a copy of each birth in the State must be forwarded to a state office in Albany and is to be found there by anyone interested at anytime. It is a singularly convenient system for those who search for records after time has changed locations and men and memories have dimmed.

Readers are requested to propose questions or cases for solution concerning theology, canon law, liturgy and any other department of sacred science that may be of interest to the clergy.

At the same time they are wholeheartedly invited to make suggestions for the betterment of the magazine and to point out topics for articles or features within the scope of PASTORAL LIFE.

HUMBLED BUT CONSOLED

As a priest I do a lot of good. Someone has pointed out that even a bad priest does a great amount of good. By conferring Baptism a priest puts people in the way of salvation. By forgiving sins he rescues people from hell. There is no denying it, by just functioning as a priest I do a lot of good for souls. But I must be humbled when I stop to realize that children whom I train in religion soon surpass me in virtue and generosity towards God. Persons take my spiritual advice and advance in holiness, while I observe and marvel yet remain mediocre myself. Why do I not practice more fervently what I feel constrained to preach? I am the instrument of grace to other souls. God uses me as the occasion of granting special graces to His loved ones. I know that I can take little credit for this. He merely allows me to be His instrument. It is God who deserves the credit. But with all my limitations, and my own rather bad correspondence with God's grace, I am deeply grateful that I can be of some use to God in His concern for souls. When a priest honestly surveys his work and sees real spiritual accomplishment in his people, he can scarcely be anything but deeply humbled, yet equally consoled. If God sees fit to use me to help others, He must be deeply interested in wanting to help me too. If I correspond with His grace as well as some of my people do, I will be as holy as they. And actually, the Church expects me to surpass the laity in real spirituality and be a living example to them. I am abashed at my lack of correspondence with God's grace, yet deeply consoled that God uses me nevertheless, and continues to offer me every opportunity and means I need to reach great sanctity.

READING

We read if we have something to read, and time in which to do the reading. We read the morning paper because someone brings it to us; and while we eat breakfast or relax afterwards, we find time in which to read it. Besides, its contents interest us. The reason why we often do not read more meaty matter is partly because we do not have it as readily available as the morning paper. Actually we have to procure books, and subscribe to magazines, and have them about. Then when an opportunity presents itself we can pick up the book or magazine and read. Ten minutes or a half hour is not enough time in which to go out and buy a book and start reading, but if you have the book handy in some strategic spot you can just pick it up and start reading it without delay. It is advisable to procure some of the best current

books both secular and spiritual and just have them handy. Likewise subscribe to some of the more worthwhile periodicals. Even if you do not read everything you buy or subscribe to, you at least will have on hand plenty of material when you feel like reaching for somehting to read. We cannot keep well-informed without reading. We cannot hope to be interesting preachers without doing a lot of reading. We certainly will not be much of conversationalists. We cannot maintain a vigorous spiritual life without the frequent nourishment of spiritual reading, nor receive inspiration for our own work and activities without reading the biographies of successful men and women particularly in the field of religion and sanctity. And we cannot read without something to read. And very often we will not make the effort to read unless the reading matter is right at hand. So the place for magazines and books is not in some neat but inaccessible file or closed bookcase, but right within reach. And we do have to make the initial effort to put them there.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

A priest in parish work sometimes finds the Office a burden. But this burden is definitely a part of his daily work. A priest gets paid—so to speak—to say the Office. He is supported in a material way and expected to pray for the rest of the Church. His saying the Office is as much a part of his work as giving instructions, taking census, or keeping books—even more so. And done with the right motive it will save souls. If the recitation of the Breviary is subjectively difficult, that does not mean that it is for that reason useless. An honest effort to say the Office well will, without question, do good for souls. It is a great aid to saying the Office well to realize that this **onus** for me will be a **bonum** for my people. Besides having the general intention to do what the Church wants me to do by way of praising God, I can add specific intentions for particular needs in my ministry. I can also use the Office as a kind of penance to make up for my own sins and as a mortification to win God's grace for my people, now this one, now that one, for this particular prospective convert, or for this problem case, as the occasions arise. In a sense, the more difficult I find the Office, the greater offering I can make to God. The Office is not useless because incidentally onerous to me. It can be for that reason all the more beneficial for myself and for others. But it is very probable that if I consciously use the Office as a tool in my pastoral ministry to help save souls, it will cease to be so much of a burden, and become rather a daily consolation. Whenever I take up my breviary I can remind myself that this particular recitation may be precisely what, in God's providence, may swing a conversion or crack a difficult case, or pull me over some difficulty known only to me and to God.

REV. T. C. SIEKMANN

BOOK-REVIEW Selections

TO GOVERN IS TO LOVE, by F. X. Ronsin, S.J. Translated by Sister Eugenia Logan, S.P. Society of St. Paul, New York. 287 pp. $3.00.

When in 1947 the compendious **Pour Mieux Gouverner** appeared, discerning critics hailed it as a triumph and predicted it would become a classic; a judgment which the personal approbation of Pius XII, after the second edition, confirmed. For those who wanted a resume of the 500-page collection of texts relevant to the psychology of government in communities of religious women, Pere Ronsin, in 1952, wrote **Gouverner c'est... Aimer** which is, as the author himself points out, less a digest of his masterwork than a new book designed as a complement to the first. This admirable translation makes it available now to English readers. It is a splendid treatise and should be required reading for all religious superiors; for, while it concerns itself primarily with the government of religious women, its basic principles apply to all, apart from sex. Indeed, the editorial board of **Civilta' Cattolica** has endorsed this sentiment, contending that with minor changes it could be addressed to all superiors.

Thorough, realistic, the fruit of experience as well as study, rich in insights and practical suggestions, it is a fine, specified commentary on that loveliest and, in some senses, most onerous of invitations, "Come, Follow Me." Pere Ronsin addresses himself brilliantly to such controversial subjects as psychiatry, the **zeitgeist**, temperamental and sociological differences in succeeding generations of religious candidates; and in the treatment of all off them emerges as a mind poised, authoritative, humble. He is a clear teacher, and any superior owes it to himself to meditate on his message.

WILLIAM A. DONAGHY, S.J.
"America"

THE WIFE DESIRED by Rev. Leo J. Kinsella. Jos. F. Paluch Co. 68 pp. $2.50 (paper bound 70c)

This is a wholesome, informative, helpful book on what makes an ideal wife. It is dedicated to Mary, the perfect spouse and mother.

The author begins with the thesis that the role of a girl in life is the most glamorous and fascinating in all the world. He points out that the ideal wife inspires, while the failure nags. She is ambitious for her husband, not for herself. Physical beauty attracks, but not like personality. Patience is a jewel for the good wife.

A significant sentence from an excellent chapter is this one: "The stupid expression 'marriage is a fifty-fifty deal' implies yardsticks, tape measures, half cups, full table spoons, and the like."

Purity is what most good men admire so much in a woman. Fear of childbirth, frigid women, sense of humor, humility, companionship are all treated well. Also suspicion, in-laws, finances, religion. The book ends beautifully with Mary as the climactic theme. Many discussion questions are presented. Much good will come from this worthy volume.

Rev. Paul M. Gilmore

CATHOLIC SHRINES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, by Father Francis Beauchesne Thornton. Wilfred Funk. $4.75.

It tells the stories of 119 shrines of popular pilgrimage. The first book of its kind, deals with the devotions, miracles, history, art and architecture of shrines in the Northeast, South, Midwest, Southwest, the Pacific Coast, and Canada. It is supplemented by more than 140 photographs and maps, and gives exact locations. Father Thornton is book editor of the Catholic Digest. His name is well known to Catholics as a poet, an author, and a lecturer in considerable demand. This is more than a book for traveler and tourist. Stay-at-homes will make armchair pilgrimages through its 352 pages—a journey across a continent and through time. P.L.

SHORT NOTICES

THE KINGDOM IS YOURS by Father Forestier, S.M. Fides, $3.50. The author has a refreshing way of teaching the moral principles of Christianity to our youth. He teaches them from the Gospel, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, thus making morality vibrant and engaging.

THE APOSTOLIC ITCH, by Vincent J. Giese. Fides, $2.75. A penetrating appraisal of the lay apostolate by a layman.

GOD'S ENGINEER, by Daniel Sargent. Scepter, 190 pp. $2.50. The story of an engineer (Isidoro Zorgano) who may soon be canonized.

A CITY PARISH GROWS AND CHANGES, by Sr. M. Martina Abbott, S.C. More. $3.00. A sociological study of every aspect of an urban Pittsburgh parish that is the result of 15 years of parish visiting and social casework. Of interest to every pastor.

IN HIM WAS LIFE, by John P. Delaney, S. J. America Press. $1.35. Written for priests, nuns and lay people. Everyday living and thinking is the theme that is woven into the gospels of the Feast Days of the year.

THE MANNER IS ORDINARY, by John LaFarge, S.J. Harcourt, B. Co. $4.75. The inspiring autobiography of a leading member of the famous LaFarge family. There are splendid chapters on many topics. Destined to become a best-seller.

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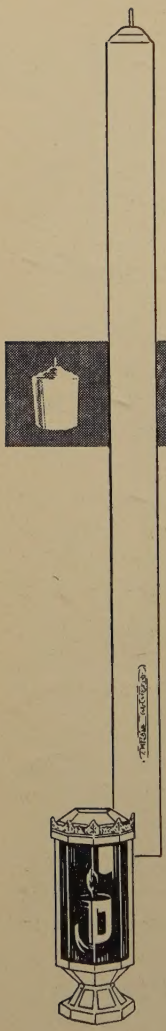

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